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ABSTRACT

A summary is presented of the Project on Reallocation, which investigated faculty staffing and academic program practices at a random sample of 369 four-year colleges and universities, as well as reallocation, reduction, and/or retrenchment patterns. Telephone interviews were conducted with 318 officials (usually the chief academic officer), and site visits were made at nine institutions. Only six percent of the institutions had no tenure system, and use of part-time faculty was the most prevalent staffing alternative to traditional tenure-track staffing. During 1981-1982, more than 70 percent of the schools offered faculty opportunities to retrain for new or revised assignment, but only about 17 percent actually had faculty retraining. Three-quarters of the schools reported reallocating funds or positions with academic budgets. More than 16 percent of the institutions had retrenched faculty since 1977, and 10 percent of tenure-granting schools had retrenched at least one tenured faculty member in that time. The majority of staffing alternatives were directed toward maintaining or lowering the number of tenured faculty as a proportion of the total institutional faculty complement, in order to achieve greater flexibility. In most cases, retrenchment of tenured faculty was the last resort of institutions that had been stripped of such flexibility. (SW)

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THE PROJECT ON REALLOCATION

An Executive Summary

(February 1985)

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This executive summary is designed to provide information to those who participated or demonstrated an interest in the Project on Reallocation. Since 1982, we have been gathering information about prevailing governance practices in four-year colleges and universities. We have sought to:

— *describe* faculty staffing and academic program practices in four-year colleges and in universities;

— *identify* reallocation, reduction, and/or retrenchment patterns; and

— *analyze* the implications of these practices and patterns.

In this summary, we concentrate on describing and identifying what we found. During 1984-85, more detailed analyses of the project's findings will become available (Mortimer, Bagshaw, and Masland, forthcoming; Mortimer and Taylor, 1984; Mortimer, Bagshaw, and Caruso, 1984; and Bagshaw, 1984).

The results reported here are based on telephone interviews with officials (usually the chief academic officer) in a random sample of 369 four-year colleges and universities* (318 or 86 percent responded), site visits at nine institutions, and the reports of other research projects on similar topics. The data file we created from the telephone survey also includes such basic institutional characteristics as enrollment change over ten years and Carnegie classification.

In this summary, we report our basic survey results and some of the lessons gleaned from the site visits. We offer them as thanks to you for helping us learn more about how institutions operate.

Growth is the dominant enrollment experience of four-year colleges and universities over the ten-year period 1972-1981. Almost one-third of respondent institutions have implemented enrollment caps. Enrollment growth is associated with greater use of part-time faculty; enrollment decline is associated with greater use of faculty retrenchment.

About 69 percent of respondent institutions had enrollment increases of 5 percent or more (enrollment "gainers"); only 20 percent of the institutions had experienced enrollment decreases of 5 percent or more (enrollment "decliners"). About 11 percent of respondents had enrollment decreases or increases of less than 5 percent during the ten-year period ("stable-enrollment" institutions). As suggested by Table 1, a significantly larger percentage of doctorate-granting institutions were enrollment gainers (81 percent), and a significantly larger percentage of liberal arts colleges (28 percent) experienced enrollment decline.

TABLE 1

FTE ENROLLMENT CHANGE,* FALL 1972 TO FALL 1981 BY CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION	GROWTH N	GROWTH %	STABLE N	STABLE %	DECLINE N	DECLINE %
1. Doctorate-Granting	34	81	3	07	5	12
2. Comprehensives	101	74	15	11	21	15
3. Liberal Arts Colleges	80	60	16	12	37	28
TOTALS**	215	69	34	11	63	20

*Change is defined as at least 5 percent growth or decline in FTE enrollment.
**Six of the 318 institutions did not exist in 1972.

One of the principal responses that institutions are making to deal with enrollment surges in areas such as business, engineering, and computer science is to cap enrollments — almost a third of all respondent institutions have either institution-wide or program-specific enrollment caps. The use of enrollment caps appears to be concentrated in certain types of institutions: Almost two-thirds of the doctorate-granting institutions have enrollment caps, whereas more than 80 percent of liberal arts colleges do not. Doctorate-granting universities are significantly more likely to have used this management device to control or limit imbalances due to student demand. Caps on specific programs account for 70 percent of reported enrollment caps.

To a statistically significant degree, enrollment gainers were likely to make greater use of part-time faculty than were decliners or stable-enrollment institutions. About 34 percent of gainers had appointed more than 10 percent of their full-time faculty to nontenure tracks, compared with 20 percent of decliners and 17 percent of stable-enrollment institutions. Enrollment decliners were more likely to have retrenched faculty than gainers or stable-enrollment institutions. About 28 percent of decliners had retrenched faculty since 1977, compared with about 13 percent of gainers and about 14 percent of stable-enrollment institutions.

Tenure-Related Staffing Practices

Traditional tenure-track staffing remains the predominant method of appointing faculty members among four-year colleges and universities.

Ninety-four percent (n = 299) of respondent institutions in the project survey had tenure systems, and only 6 percent (n = 19) had no tenure system but appointed all faculty to fixed-term contracts or used some form of open-ended agreement. Institutions with no tenure system were primarily small, private, liberal arts colleges.

About 57 percent of full-time faculty members are tenured at four-year colleges and universities. When part-time appointments are taken into account, the average tenure level among four-year institutions with tenure systems is about 50 percent of full-time-equivalent (FTE) faculty.

Table 2 shows that about 57 percent of full-time faculty at all respondent institutions were tenured in fall 1981. However, measuring institutional tenure levels as the percentage of full-time faculty that is tenured ignores the additional nontenured faculty resources and staffing

*Professional schools and other specialized institutions were excluded from the population from which the samples was drawn.

flexibility many institutions have gained by using part-time faculty, who, as shown in Table 2, represent about 25 percent of total faculty members at all four-year colleges and universities. When institutional tenure level is calculated as the percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty that is tenured (with one part-time faculty member accounted as one-third FTE), the mean FTE tenured faculty proportion for the 299 respondent institutions that had tenure systems is .503; that is, on the average, about 50 percent of FTE faculty represent tenure commitments.

Tenure proportions were, on the average, significantly lower at small (.467), private (.468), and liberal arts (.470) institutions. Enrollment gainers (.480) had significantly lower tenure proportions than decliners (.546) and stable-enrollment (.554) institutions. Large (.557), public (.557), systematized (.556), and doctorate-granting (.547) institutions had, on the average, significantly higher tenure proportions. Unionized institutions (.559) had significantly higher tenure proportions than nonunionized institutions (.496).

TABLE 2

PROJECT ON REALLOCATION
RESPONDENT INSTITUTION FACULTY DATA (HEADCOUNT) — FALL 1981

		FULL-TIME N	%	PART-TIME N	%	TOTAL
Tenured	N	49,012	98.8	588	1.2	49,600
	%	57.42		2.0		43.5
Tenure-Track	N	25,509	98.5	389	1.5	25,898
	%	29.88		1.3		22.7
Other*	N	10,843	28.1	27,750	71.9	3,859
	%	12.7		96.6		33.8
TOTALS		85,364	74.8	28,727	25.2	114,091
		100.000		100.000		100.000

NATIONAL ESTIMATE — FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (X 4.3)**

	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	TOTAL
Tenured	210,752	2,528	213,280
Tenured-Track	109,689	1,673	111,362
Other*	46,625	119,325	165,950
TOTALS	367,066	123,526	490,592

*"Other" includes both faculty on appointments at institutions that do not award tenure and faculty on nontenure-track appointments at tenure-awarding institutions.

**Sample institutions represent slightly more than 23 percent of the population of four-year colleges and universities; thus, our national estimates result from multiplying sample frequencies by a factor of 4.3.

Almost 30 percent of four-year colleges and universities with tenure systems have established tenure quotas or absolute limits. About one-third of these quotas were at the department or unit level.

Eighty-eight of the 299 respondent institutions with tenure systems (29.4 percent) have quotas at the institutional level; however, only 31 of these 88 had established quotas for particular academic units. Of the 88 with tenure limits at the institutional level, 37 (42 percent) had absolute percentage limits, and 51 (58 percent) characterized their limits as informal guidelines.

The difficulty of attaining tenure is perceived to have increased at two-thirds of all types of four-year colleges and universities with tenure systems; 96 percent of responding institutions attribute this to deliberate efforts to limit tenure awards, primarily through tougher tenure standards. Respondents also reported that promotion is more difficult.

Of 190 institutions responding to a question about why tenure had become more difficult to attain, 183 (96.3 percent) cited specific efforts to limit tenure awards — most (157 or 83 percent) indicating that existing tenure criteria had been more strictly applied or that new, more restrictive criteria had been adopted.

Perceptions of change in the difficulty of attaining promotion follow the same general pattern as perceptions of change in the difficulty of attaining tenure. Of 310 institutions responding (including 11 institutions with no tenure system), 195 (62.9 percent) reported that promotion had become more difficult to attain at their institutions over the five-year period prior to the Project on Reallocation survey.

One must caution that these data are based on *perceptions* of change in the difficulty of attaining tenure and promotion and may not indicate actual changes over time in the proportion of tenure-eligible faculty receiving tenure awards.

About half of four-year colleges and universities conduct periodic posttenure reviews; about 3 percent report using results from these reviews for dismissal of tenured faculty.

Of 299 respondent institutions with tenure systems, 154 (51.1 percent) reported they systematically review all tenured faculty. About half reported annual review cycles, about 20 percent reported three-year review cycles, and about 20 percent reported five-year review cycles.

Almost 75 percent said the results were used to improve faculty performance. Only 10 institutions (3.3 percent) indicated that (negative) posttenure reviews were used to terminate tenured faculty members.

Alternatives to Tenure-Track Staffing

Use of part-time faculty is by far the most prevalent staffing alternative to traditional tenure-track staffing at four-year colleges and universities.

Of 318 respondent institutions, 294 (92.5 percent) employed part-time faculty. In the fall of 1981, there were 28,727 part-time faculty in these 294 institutions. To a statistically significant degree, private institutions were likely to have higher proportions of part-time faculty than public institutions, and enrollment gainers were likely to have higher proportions of part-time faculty than either stable-enrollment institutions or decliners.

Slightly less than two-thirds of four-year colleges and universities with tenure systems appoint full-time nontenure-track faculty; on the average, about one in twelve full-time faculty at these institutions was a nontenure-track appointment.

Of 298 institutions with tenure tracks, 194 (65.1 percent) appoint full-time faculty on nontenure-tracks. These 194 institutions employed a total 9,847 nontenure-track, full-time faculty in fall 1981. To a statistically significant degree, large,

public, and doctorate-granting institutions were likely to have a higher proportion of nontenure-track faculty than other institutional types.

Reallocation

During the 1981-82 academic year, more than 70 percent of four-year colleges and universities provided opportunities for faculty to retrain for new or revised assignments in 1981-82, but less than 1 percent granted paid leave to retrain. About 17 percent of four-year colleges and universities actually had faculty retraining for new or revised assignments.

The national discussion of reallocation led us to *expect* that institutions would be involved in retraining faculty to help with burgeoning enrollments in certain areas. Of 318 institutions responding, 230 (72.3 percent) reported providing opportunities to retrain, but only 3 institutions (less than 1 percent) granted paid leave to faculty to retrain for new or revised assignment. Fifty-four institutions (17.3 percent) reported faculty retraining for new or revised assignment in 1981-82. These 54 institutions reported a total 103 faculty members retraining. Both comprehensive (22.3 percent) and doctorate-granting (20.0 percent) institutions were significantly more likely than liberal arts colleges (11.2 percent) to have faculty retraining, and public institutions (24.6 percent) were more likely than private institutions (13.1 percent) to have faculty retraining.

Unionized institutions were significantly more likely than nonunionized institutions to provide opportunities for faculty to retrain. Unionized institutions also were more likely than nonunionized institutions to have faculty retraining. About 36 percent of unionized institutions had faculty retraining in 1981-82, compared to about 15 percent of nonunionized institutions.

Three-quarters of institutional respondents reported reallocating funds or positions within academic budgets.

Seventy-five percent of respondents reported they had reallocated funds or positions within their budgets. One-third reported that funds from nonacademic areas had been reallocated into academic areas of the institutional budget. Doctorate-granting institutions were significantly more likely than liberal arts colleges to have reallocated funds and positions and to have reallocated funds from nonacademic to academic areas.

Reductions

More than 16 percent of four-year colleges and universities in our sample had retrenched faculty since 1977, and 10 percent of tenure-granting institutions had retrenched at least one tenured faculty member in that time.

Our national estimate is that from 1977 to 1982, approximately 3,950 faculty were laid off or terminated, and another 1,707 resigned when threatened with dismissal. This includes dismissals for cause (incompetence, moral turpitude) and for medical reasons and, consequently, are not exclusively retrenchments by our definition. Retrenchment was defined by the project as "dismissal (including layoff) of tenured faculty members, or dismissal (including layoff) of nontenured faculty members in midcontract, for reasons other than just cause or medical reasons."

Of 318 respondent institutions, 52 (16.4 percent) had retrenched at least one faculty member since 1977. The total number of faculty retrenched by the 52 institutions was 453. Of the 299 tenure-awarding respondents, 30 (10.0 percent) had retrenched at least one *tenured* faculty member since 1977. The total number of tenured faculty retrenched by these institutions was 192 (multiply by 4.3 to get national estimates).

Enrollment experience is related to a statistically significant degree to faculty retrenchment. About 28 percent of enrollment decliners had retrenched faculty, compared with about 14 percent of institutions with stable enrollments and 13 percent of enrollment gainers. Unionized institutions are significantly more likely to retrench faculty than nonunionized institutions. About 30 percent of unionized institutions in the sample reported having retrenched faculty since 1977, compared to about 15 percent of nonunionized institutions.

One-half of four-year colleges and universities engage in no early retirement planning; about 37 percent offer incentives for faculty to retire early, and about 37 percent have had faculty elect early retirement during 1981-82.

Ninety-three institutions (29.3 percent) reported having a formal early retirement plan, and 67 (21.1 percent) reported negotiating early retirements with faculty individually, on an informal basis. Small, private, nonsystematized, and liberal arts institutions were more likely to engage in no formal planning or informal planning only. Formal early retirement planning was more likely to occur at large, public, systematized, and doctorate-granting institutions.

Of 299 institutions responding, 111 (37.1 percent) reported providing incentives for faculty to retire early. With regard to types of incentives, 17 (15.3 percent) of the 111 reported providing retirement income supplements, 14 (12.6 percent) continued employee benefits after retirement, 9 (8.1 percent) offered reduced teaching loads, 54 (48.6 percent) offered a combination of these incentives, and 17 (15.3 percent) reported "other incentives." Large, public, and doctorate-granting institutions were more likely to provide incentives for faculty to retire early.

Of 305 institutions responding, 193 (63.3 percent) reported no faculty electing early retirement during 1981-82, and 112 (36.7 percent) reported at least one faculty member electing early retirement. These 112 institutions reported a total 462 faculty electing early retirement in 1981-82. On the basis of the figures reported by respondents, we estimate the number of early retirements nationally in 1981-82 as 1,987. Faculty were more likely to elect early retirement at large, public, and doctorate-granting institutions.

Discussion

Although the project did not collect survey data on the frequency of the practice, our interviews, site visits, and the literature support the conclusion that attrition is the most common way to control or reduce the number of faculty positions.

The crucial debate over controlling faculty positions through attrition centers on deciding who has the ultimate authority to collapse, to fill, or to create a position. We asked respondents, "In the case of a faculty vacancy, whose approval must be gained before the position can be refilled?" Almost 85 percent replied that the *campus* administration's approval was necessary. The fundamental point here is that the decision to fill or create a position is an essential

ingredient in a system of *fiscal* management.

In some institutions in our sample, nine out of ten times the decision to *create* a tenure-track position is a *de facto* commitment to tenure the person hired. At one of the campuses in our survey, the chief academic officer described in the following (paraphrased) statement how entry to the tenure track was controlled:

> We have approximately 1,060 tenure-track positions and another 1,000 nontenure-track and part-time faculty. Each year, through resignations and retirement, we have to decide what to do with the vacancies. This discussion takes place with the full understanding that if we fill 40 positions with tenure-track appointments, fully 36 or 37 of the appointees will be tenured at the end of the probationary appointment. In order to remain flexible in our staffing, therefore, we have to be very careful about entry to the tenure-track.

Not filling a position when the incumbent resigns, retires, or is dismissed not only brings about immediate savings but is probably the least likely of the common ways of reducing the number of faculty positions to arouse significant opposition from faculty, because no continuing faculty member's job is directly sacrificed. However, collapsing positions may prevent the infusion of new ideas from newly hired faculty and the opportunity to realize affirmative action hiring agendas.

On the basis of our survey data, interviews with presidents and chief academic officers, and site visits, *we conclude that concern for the demise of tenure through institutional efforts to address the problems of resource decline is not well founded.* Only 6 percent of the respondent institutions have no tenure system. The majority of staffing alternatives are not directed against the concept or practice of tenuring faculty but are directed toward maintaining or lowering the number of tenured faculty as a proportion of the total institutional faculty complement, in order to achieve greater flexibility. Our findings support the view that in most cases retrenchment of tenured faculty is the last resort of institutions that have been stripped of such flexibility.

Small institutions that depend primarily on tuition for operating revenues have been most obviously at risk from enrollment decline, and because of their small size, many of these institutions have relatively little capacity to reallocate. Larger institutions that depend heavily on state appropriations for operating revenues, while having more scope for reallocation, are frequently constrained by state-imposed budgetary policies that are intended to achieve accountability and efficiency in the expenditure of public funds but that limit institutional flexibility. Examples include restrictions on the transfer of funds from one budget category to another, mandatory return to the state of salary savings realized through position control, restrictions on the ability to carry budgetary savings forward to the next fiscal year, and state-level mechanisms for securing approval to undertake academic program closures. Under these conditions, a relatively straightforward attempt to reallocate institutional resources to teaching areas that have experienced large increases in student demand can become a major undertaking. *Within* institutions, those who stand to lose funds or positions by institutional reallocation efforts seldom think such efforts fair or wise, and in some cases mount effective political opposition against them.

In an uncertain resource environment, we believe it is in the interest of most institutions to develop a clear picture of present and future contingencies, and specific external and internal constraints on their capacity to reallocate. To achieve greater flexibility in managing or adapting to decline, most institutions also will benefit from developing a detailed profile of their current faculty and staffing practices and conducting detailed analyses of the comparative advantages and costs of various staffing alternatives. The results of these analyses will provide the basis for formulating a new mix of staffing policies that maximize flexibility and are consistent with institutional goals and environmental realities.

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